京都大学文学研究科　グローバル COE　「親密圏と公共圏の再編成をめざすアジア拠点」

学会発表渡航支援報告書

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　　The aim of my talk was to propose a retrospective reading of one of Emmanuel Levinas' major works, *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence*, which was the main topic of the conference. I tried to place this work in the context of his later texts written in the 1980s, in order to discover the breaking point between the concepts of 'sovereignty' (*souveraineté*) and 'unconditionality' (*inconditionnalité*). The latter, structurally separate from the former, is closely linked to the Levinasian concept of democracy, which can be understood via the structure that I indicate as 'beyond ontology in ontology'.

　　If this late major work seems overwhelming, it is not only due to its speculations about the substitution of the subject for the other or about the persecution of the subject by the other; it is also due to Levinas' stunning superimposition of the notion of 'Illeity' (*Illéité*) and 'there is' (*il y a*), which ultimately requires us to simultaneously return and not return to ontology. Therefore, my analysis focused both upon its opening *beyond* ontology, described by Levinas as the 'meta-ontological' (*méta-ontologique*) dimension, and on its opening *in* ontology, in order to understand this curious topology of the enclave of 'beyond-in' (*au-delà-dans*).

　　Levinas uses the expression, 'Beyond A in A', in one of his lessons on the Talmud, entitled, 'Beyond the State in the State' (*Au-delà de l'État dans l'État*) (1988). This was written after *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence*, and the expression is emphasized by Jacques Derrida in 'The Word of Reception' (*Le mot d'accueil*) (1996). Levinas indicates the concept of democracy as a sort of separation from power (*pouvoir*), although it should be based on the power (κράτος) or sovereignty of the people (δῆμος). In my talk, I examined the development of this structure of 'beyond-in' in *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence*, with particular attention to Chapter V.

　　To support my suggestion, I introduced the fundamental Levinasian distinction between ontological and meta-ontological levels as based on the distinction between the declinability

(*déclinabilité*) and undeclinability (*indéclinabilité*) of the subject in its self-accusation (i.e. the accusation of its own possibility and power). The first is based on the sovereignty of the subject—and, thus, simply on the limiting of its possibility and power. The second, however, emerges in the subject's 'unconditionality', which pushes it towards its own total persecution, accusing its possibility and power as Being.

From this perspective, I first analysed the structure of this persecution, or 'substitution', as the *meta-ontological possibility of ontological impossibility*. Substitution for the other is possible only because it is ontologically impossible. In other words, the substitution demands the subject to discover its unconditionality as separated from its sovereignty.

The second stage of my analysis scrutinised the metamorphosis of the subject from the hostage of substitution into a member of society through the 'comparison of the incomparable'. I interpreted this transformation of the subject as the *ontological possibility of meta-ontological impossibility*, insofar as this comparison—meta-ontologically impossible—is required on an ontological level. For Levinas, this metamorphosis is the opportunity to revisit the notion of sovereignty as well as the notions of power, possibility, and State. With this symmetry between the subject and the other members of society, which is considered a measure of the immeasurable, the impersonal 'there is' (*il y a*) re-emerges as the 'surplus of the non-sense above the sense' (*surplus du non-sens sur le sens*).

In the final stage of my analysis, I examined the 'possible confusion' between these ontological and meta-ontological levels that consists in giving the 'there is' (*il y a*) the privilege of serving as the condition of possibility and, simultaneously, of the impossibility of substitution. Thus, the 'substitution' as *meta-ontological possibility of ontological impossibility* reveals itself to be an aporetical *possibility of impossibility*. The same aporia occurs with the 'comparison of the incomparable' as the *ontological possibility of meta-ontological impossibility*. Hence, I argued that the impossible possibility to separate 'unconditionality' from 'sovereignty' lies at the very heart of the Levinasian understanding of democracy.